

Fifty-fifth session

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Responses to the list of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of the first and second periodic reports

* The present document is issued without formal editing .

Afghanistan *

List of issues relevant to CEDAW Report

To the Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has shown its commitment for the inclusiveness of women in all sectors and has endeavoured for necessary measures in this regard. Constitutional, legal and administrative measures for the implementation of CEDAW convention have been taken. The constitution, Afghanistan laws, establishment of Ministry of Women Affairs and Independent commission on human rights, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy all insists upon human rights and gender equality and these are some of the major measures taken by the government to eliminate discrimination against women and bring them in decision making and leadership.

Steps taken in order to involve women and women organizations and institutions in peace and reconciliation process

2. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan believes in effective role of women and women organizations and institutions in peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan, it guarantees and strengthens women participation in this sector. For this purpose the governments of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to bring women and women organizations and institutions in peace and reconciliation process and to guarantee their participation the following steps have been taken:

On national level:

3. The government of Afghanistan during its preparation for holding national consultative peace Jirga and traditional Jirga paved the way for women participation on a huge scale in the mentioned two historical Jirga's which provided the basis and fundamental principles of national peace and reconciliation process.

4. Prior to holding of the mentioned Jirga's in order to choose female representative extensive consultations took place with women organizations and institutions, as a result of which women role in the decision making was effective and pivotal.

5. The government of Afghanistan has taken in to consideration women participation and role in the structure and designing of national peace and reconciliation program at all steps in order to make this program pragmatic. However in the design level necessary consultations have taken place with women organizations and activists as well as members of the civil society. Second strong guarantee is the women participation in national peace and reconciliation program.

6. Respecting the decisions of national consultative peace Jirga the government in the High Peace Council structure and provincial peace committees paved the way for women active participation in all levels of decision making in national peace and reconciliation process. Currently more than 90 women activists are practically active both in the centre and provinces in leading peace process.

7. Women members of the High Peace Council are in close cooperation with other women activists and have effective role in direct and indirect negotiations, similarly they have expanded their efforts in discussions with the civil society, political parties and internal and external political leaders whereas all have effect on decision making through one or another way.

On Regional and International level:

8. The government and High Peace Council in the decisions of major international conferences regarding Afghanistan (Second Bonn Conference, Chicago, Tokyo and 'Heart of Asia' regional conference in Kabul and Istanbul) has made effort in order to garner official commitment of the international community in support of women role in the national peace and reconciliation process, and in all declarations of these conferences official insistence has been made for supporting women role.

On Technical and Local level:

9. As a result of High Peace Council efforts one facet of donors in close cooperation with the High Peace Council and civil society organizations and women have carved out special programs for the capacity building and progress of women in order to ensure women participation in the national peace and reconciliation process as well as harmonizing and collection of their opinions and their participation in peace activities on centre and provincial levels.

10. Particularly women had enormous role and activities in the second half of the year 1391. Women committee of the High Peace Council has established a huge linking network with women activists in the government, Afghanistan Parliament, civil society and youth in the centre and provinces, which still is in need of further strengthening and support. This network is a strong guarantee of

women participation in national peace and reconciliation process. All these activities are fundamentally guaranteed in the designed activities, laws and principles of the peace program.

11. In the developmental programs which are implemented in support of peace program, it has been stressed and instructed that ground should be paved for women participation in order to utilize it and should be part of the designers of the program both at central and provincial levels.

Work on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 National Action Plan and women participation in economic and political reconstruction of the country

12. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to create United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) Action Plan on June 21, 2011 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Finland. According to the MoU, Finland will cooperate with Afghanistan in the implementation of Resolution 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1960 related to women, peace and security. Similarly based on the MoU, Finland is committed to support national action plan process from financial and technical perspective and share its experience with Afghanistan. The MoU was extended for one more year on 3rd September 2012.

13. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan in its latest negotiations and agreements with Finland and UN Women Office has reached to the conclusion, that UN Women office will also be included in the creation of national action plan for the resolution 1325. It is agreed that MoU or agreement for this purpose will be signed with the mentioned office.

14. Goal for including UN Women office in the aforementioned process is to utilize their financial and technical experience and that office help in garnering international support and advocacy at the International level.

15. Works and progress regarding the creation of UNSCR 1325 national action plan up till now include the following:

•Establishment of Steering Committee:

16. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan from the very beginning in order to better manage the process of the creation of national action plan established a steering committee. The committee which is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been approved by the president and includes the following authorities:

1. Minister of Foreign Affairs — the chairperson
2. Deputy Minister of Policy for National Defense
3. Senior Security Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs
4. Deputy of the National Directorate of Security
5. Admin and Financial Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation
6. Deputy Minister of Women Affairs
7. Deputy Minister of Public Health
8. Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Justice
9. Commissioner of Women Affairs of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
10. Director of Human Rights and Women's International Affairs — Ministry of Foreign Affairs
11. Director of International Affairs, State Administrative Affairs Office
12. Representative of civil society

17. The committee up till now had two meetings where the following decisions were made:

- Approval of ToR and work plan of the steering committee, technical and consultative working group;
- Approval of public consultations plan at central and provincial level;
- Approval of technical working group structure;
- Holding of capacity building workshops regarding Resolution 1325 in relevant ministries and institutions;
- Approval of four pillars of Afghanistan National Action Plan for women, peace and security (participation, protection, prevention and Relief and recovery);
- And support from the creation of national action plan process and technical working group representatives from the relevant ministries.

•Establishment of Technical working group:

18. In order to put forward the creation of national action plan process in a best way possible, technical working group was

established. The technical working group which is composed of representatives from ministries and other organizations has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Collection of relevant information and presentation of precise reports and information for the preparation of the action plan;
- Holding of capacity building workshops regarding Resolution 1325 and the creation of action plan in the relevant organizations;
- Presentation of technical working group reports to the steering committee members;
- Follow up and implementation of all decisions made by the steering committee regarding the action plan process;
- And visiting provinces for the purpose of raising awareness regarding resolution and collection of public opinion related to the action plan.

19.The technical working group holds a meeting each month.

•Training for Technical working group members:

20.Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to raise capacity building of the technical working group has held various workshops. These workshops were held with the cooperation of the Institute of inclusive security which has enough experience in the field of women, peace and security and has experience of holding various training workshops regarding UNSCR 1325 in different countries.

Women participation in the economic and political reconstruction of the country:

21.The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan believes and is committed for the participation of women in the country political and economic reconstruction. Through the enactment of laws, approval of policies and strategies it strengthens and guarantees women participation in this connection.

22.Women participation in peace process (out of 70 members of High Peace Council 9 are women), support from women participation in the framework of Interior and Defence Ministry, appointment of women in consulates and other diplomatic missions (embassies, participation in International gathering, seminars and conferences) and active participation of women in the constitution Loya Jirga and government strong support from women participation in the political reconstruction are worth mentioning in this regard.

23.Similarly women participation in the economic reconstruction of the country has been guaranteed by the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and is seriously supported by the government.

24.In order to increase women participation in the economic reconstruction of the country currently the government has taken under consideration the following programs:

1.In rural areas permanent work and employment for women in agriculture filed.

- The government has in plan to provide women with work who live in remote areas of the country, in the following areas.
- Establishment of bank or loan schemes without interest for women;
- Establishment of agriculture and production cooperatives for women investors;
- Support of self-help oriented groups;
- Support of women NGOs (particularly the newly established NGOs with new ideas and innovations);
- And support of women projects production and marketing.

2.Work and permanent employment in small industries for women in urban areas and cities.

25.The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the women, who live in urban areas, has planned the following economic programs:

- Support of women for the development of manual industries;
- Support for marketing of women projects products;
- Establishment of banks and loan schemes without interest for women;
- And support from the establishment of women cooperatives under the leadership of women.

Steps taken for the betterment of official complaints mechanism

26.In order to ensure women access to formal justice mechanisms particularly in the rural areas, judicial and attorney offices have been established.

27.Women ministry provincial directorates, attorney office against violence and civil societies are active. They do effort for addressing problems of women who due to various reasons flee from their homes, similarly women affairs directorates for the follow up and

solution of such cases and filing complaints of women in different matters have been established in the provinces of the country.

28. Ministry of interior and defence through the employment of women in different military positions including city police stations and provinces for the purpose of registration and filing of women complaints and addressing their cases and problems has provided necessary and required cooperation. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has hired about 1432 lieutenants, officers, sergeants and guards in different sections for addressing women problems throughout the country has taken significant steps, in this field with comprehensive cooperation and efforts of civil society it has been able to remove problems and obstacles in front of women.

29. Police and judicial authorities seriously take in consideration cases of violence against women. Evaluation of 1512 cases by the violence against women attorney office in the centre is evidence of women access to judicial sources and implementation of the violence against women law in the country.

30. Based on a general letter released from the Supreme Court describing fleeing of women from homes as no crime, various steps have been taken from the government side to prevent capture of people who flee from homes.

31. High office of the attorney of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has released a general letter describing flee from home as no crime to all attorney offices in the centre and provinces, which is currently endorsed to be implemented.

32. That is why women due to flee from homes are not captured till the time the flee action is not conducted for a criminal act.

33. Those women and girls who had fled from homes on various reasons and their act were not found with a criminal act, after evaluations were introduced to shelter houses for their immunity. And in case they were found guilty of some crime and had fled (for example, fleeing after committing a murder crime or fleeing with prohibited materials) they were introduced to judicial and court sources.

34. Number of fleeing cases according to the registered numerical in the directorates of women affairs in provinces, police stations and other judicial sources in the last three years were about 1132.

Steps taken for strengthening national structure of women

35. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to concentrate, have access and improve women situation throughout the country in all areas of politics, economics and social and culture established the Ministry of Women Affairs. The women ministry in each centre of the province established a directorate of women affairs so that it can monitor women situation in the provinces. Each year substantial budget is allocated to the ministry of women affairs and it has also established training centres in the ministry and its branches, major duty of which is to raise capacity building of women and their awareness.

National Action Plan:

36. For the first time National work plan for the women of Afghanistan was prepared in order to establish coordinated and systematic activities for the purpose of improving women situation mainly in six areas: (security, rule of law and human rights, leading and participation of women, economic and social development, health and education and training). Often their programs and projects through protocol and agreement with governmental and non-governmental organizations are under execution. Ministry of women affairs is just responsible for monitoring and providing technical support regarding how the planned projects are implemented. As a result of which significant progress has been observed in the women lives. As women participation in all areas including peace process, political and cultural participation in accordance with the constitution has been guaranteed and civil society organizations under the leadership and support of government are engaged in social and political activities in different fields. Progresses made in this connection based on received reports during the last ten years are as following:

- Presence of 20% women in the constitution Loya Jirga;
- 12% in the emergency Loya Jirga;
- 25% in the consultative peace Jirga;
- 18% in the Traditional Jirga;
- 32% in second Bonn Conference;
- Participation of 40% women in the presidential and provincial council elections;
- 27% in the Wolasi Jirga and 27% in Masharano Jirga;
- 25% in the Civil Services;
- 9% in the Judicial section;
- 9% in decision making level;
- 5% in the security sector;
- 24% in Health sector;
- 15% university teachers;

- 21% university students;
- 38% school students;
- 30% teachers;
- 14% girls primary schools;
- 15% girls middle schools;
- 22% girls colleges;
- 13% private university students;
- 10% private university teachers;
- 27% private school students;
- 27% private school teachers;
- 30% in agriculture section;
- 47% employees of government and non-governmental organization is composed of girls;
- 22% civil society;
- 548 companies and private institutions are managed through women throughout the country.

Establishment of objectives, activities and timesheet for monitoring of national action plan for women:

37. In order to progress and implement national action plan for women in an effective and better way steps have been taken, from which as an example the following are mentioned here:

- Finalization of the monitoring and evaluation system mechanism of the implementation of the working plan and monitoring program for the preparation of reports of the implementation of the national work plan in ministries and other governmental organizations;
- Preparation of the monitoring and evaluation guide for gender units in ministries, governmental institutions and civil society;
- Establishment of monitoring and evaluation steering committees regarding the implementation of policies;
- Holding of meetings on level of deputy ministers, plan directors and gender representatives of all ministries and government institutions following the status of implementation of the national work plan for women;
- For monitoring of the implementation of national work plan for women in Afghanistan in the structure of the Ministry of Women Affairs general department for monitoring of this plan is active on country level, which in accordance with its policies, monitoring mechanisms and agreements already made by the ministries and other cooperating institutions, monitoring and reporting form has been prepared which is send to the committed ministries and institutions for presenting with their answers. However ministries and other institutions through their reports informs this department of their executions and achievements in particular matters, after uniting and ensuring exactly that the indicators have been implemented, this is included in the national working plan and presented to the decision making authorities.

38. Commission of violence against women include ToR and work plan which according to the paragraph 2 article 16 of law on violence against women is prepared.

Women Participation in the Civil Services in Afghanistan

39. Based on the 9th objective of the Afghanistan Independent Civil Service and Administrative Reform Commission (IARCSC) strategy (evolution of women role in civil services) and making sure 30% presence of women in civil services, based on the statistics of the Central Statistics Department which was conducted between the year 2001-2011, women percentage in the civil services have seen ups and downs.

- In the year 2001 women percentage was 19
- Year 2004 (26%)
- Year 2005 (25%)
- Year 2009 (20%) and
- In year 2011 women percentage totalled (13%) in the Civil Services.

40. While women participation in the leading level ranged from 6 till 9 per cent.

41. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to reach the target objectives and to raise women participation in the civil services through the Independent Civil Service and Administrative Reform Commission (IARCSC) has made effort from various perspectives and has taken all necessary steps in this regard.

42. Establishment of gender unit within the Independent Civil Service and Administrative Reform Commission, ministries structures and government independent institutions, presence of gender directorate representative in the civil services appointment board (grade first and second), presence of gender unit representative in the employment committees of ministries and government independent institutions in order to support women, providing privilege of 1 till 5 marks in the employment committees through positive discrimination are the steps taken by the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

43. In compliance with the presidential decree number 45 which was declared recently, in the executive and professional positions of civil services examinations till ten marks privilege has been specified for women through the (IARCSC).

44. As female employees evolution to the high level position for reaching standards is directly related to their education level. For this purpose the (IARCSC) has in plan to provide education for the female employees of ministries and other independent governmental institutions in the year 2013.

45. In the governmental and non-governmental institutions female employees are enjoying immunity and a safe working environment, in this regard manual of any kind of harassment and harm is prepared by the commission in the civil services.

Government steps for the elimination of harmful practices and stereotypes

46. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through the enactment of laws and policies has consistently made effort to eliminate stereotypes and harmful acts related to women. The government has taken these steps through the enactment of laws, polices and approval of programs like national action plan for women.

47. Fortunately through the approval of the law on violence against women where early marriages, exchanging girls for ending conflicts and forgiving crimes, preventing women from going out of their houses is considered as crime and the perpetrators are bring to the justice and law. It is a good source for ending the aforementioned harmful acts and till greater extent the bad traditions and acts harming women have decreased in the society.

48. In addition to the enactment of laws and approval of policies the ministry of women affairs throughout the country has launched a vast campaign, workshops, seminars, audio, video and picture advertisements against the stereotypes like early marriages, exchanging girls for ending conflicts, and similarly for ending social and culture discriminatory roles it is making effort.

Effort on violence against women

49. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to eliminate violence against women and provide a peaceful family and life environment, based on presidential decree number 91, endorsed law on the elimination of violence against women.

50. The government for the purpose of better implementation of this law has taken various steps including the following:

- Establishment of the High commission on elimination of violence against women;
- Establishment of provincial commissions on elimination of violence against women;
- Proposal for the establishment of attorney office on the elimination of violence against women in order to provide access for the people to the judicial sources for addressing cases related to the violence in centre and provinces;
- Preparation of activities chart of the high commission on the elimination of violence against women in centre and provinces of the country;
- Effort for the establishment of family judges under the leadership of women and similarly establishment of database for the numeric of violence against women;
- Preparation and management of regular programs for the mosque imams, religious leaders, people who give speech in mosques and other religious places in order to eliminate violence against women;
- And the establishment of office for receiving and registration of women complaints in the framework of gender directorate, human rights and children units in the ministry of interior for women employees in the line of national police for addressing and resolution of problems emanating from harassment and harm to women police.

51. High office of the attorney of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the purpose of strengthening the implementation of the law on violence against women has established attorney offices on violence against women in 6 zones of the country and has in plan to establish such attorney offices in all provinces in the coming years.

52. To all the executive authorities of law and judiciary on elimination of violence against women and that how violence against women can be identified, investigated and put under judicial process, legal and academic trainings have been provided.

53. In order to raise capacity building of police, attorney officers and other authorities' short and long term seminars have been held through experienced attorney officers and judges. Providing of training in rural areas with the help of the education ministry, holding legal training courses for developmental councils and local/village influential people, and strengthening coordination between attorney offices for violence against women and women affairs directorates and pilgrimage and Haj affairs are the trainings provided to the

relevant officials.

54. Similarly for awareness rising among women about the law on elimination of violence against women and filing violence complaints with the decision making authorities, various steps are taken in this regard as well. Steps taken include:

- Launching of three months holistic campaign for decreasing the level of violence against women in accordance with the presidential decree number 45 in centre, provinces and districts with the participation of leading authorities from the provinces, provincial councils, members of parliament, religious clerics, national influential personalities, women rights activists and other governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- Holding of more than 35 awareness raising workshops and seminars on level of governmental and non-governmental organizations, clerics and national influential personalities;
- Campaign for decreasing violence against women in centre and 34 provinces and some districts of the country, leading authorities of the provinces, provincial councils, members of parliament, governmental and non-governmental institutions and holding meetings of the commission on elimination of violence against women for the purpose of reaching to the violence against women cases which in total makes about (131628) persons including both men and women in the centre have taken benefit of it;
- Holding of separate five days workshops (law on elimination of violence against women and convention on elimination of violence against women) for the employees and leading authorities of the ministries and government institutions and units in the centre and 15 provinces in the year 2012;
- Holding short and long term workshops and seminars for the employees of ministries, government institutions and units in ten provinces of the country in year 2011 for the purpose of eradicating all kind of discrimination against women and inclusion of gender in fundamental documents of government institutions;
- Holding one day campaign on elimination of violence against women for the employees of districts and village elders in 14 districts of Kabul province;
- Holding one day campaign in five ministries of the centre in order to eliminate violence against women in the year 2012;
- Broadcasting of 36 audio and video spots through televisions and national and local radios related to the law on elimination of violence against women and decrease of violence against women in all sectors;
- Holding conferences and seminars and celebration of the international day on elimination of violence against women with the participation of religious clerics, elders and influential personalities regarding their active participation in decreasing and eradicating violence against women in the country;
- And holding of television discussions regarding violence against women from Islamic perspective, economic violence, health and education faced by women with the participation of responsible persons, clerics, experts, women activists and civil society institutions.

55. Similarly the women, who according to the law on elimination of violence against women file complaints, are provided with legal facilitation. This facilitation include free legal services, legal consultations, free defence lawyer, their introduction to the shelter house till the time their case is resolved and holding of family meetings and providing of awareness regarding their rights.

56. Shelter houses are currently supported by external NGOs, ministry of women affairs is only monitoring it. Ministry of women affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has in plan to take the responsibility of supporting and establishing government shelter centres in the year 2013 through step by step approach, it wants to bring all these shelter houses under its control and also increase its number.

Government actions regarding the eradication of honour killing and amendment in penal code:

57. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the purpose of preventing murders in the name of honour has taken actions recently. Based on the presidential order review of the penal code has commenced, which aims to bring one penal code and one of the standards on which there is agreement in the penal code is taking into consideration the benefits of the international conventions and Islamic Sharia orders. Murder of women (wife or other family) on honour grounds are against the orders of Islamic Sharia and in Islamic Sharia specific conditions are there for the perpetrators against women. That is why this subject in a best way possible, which guarantees the implementation of justice, will be included in that.

Education:

1. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has consistently made effort for providing women and girls with better education throughout the country.

58. Recently huge decrease had been seen in the traditions and norms disliked in the society regarding education of women and girls, and enormous number of girls and women get education currently which are not resisted by family or relatives.

59. Education Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to eradicated negative opinion about girl's education and for the prevention of attacks on girls schools had taken the following steps:

- **Public awareness:** campaigns are conducted all over the country through mosques, schools, flip charts, posters, media and brochures.

•Similarly teachers and headmasters have been raising awareness among families through students about the importance and impact of education.

•At the same time audio-visual awareness programs were launched continuously through media which are in general aired through local radios.

•**Establishment of religious Madrassas for girls** in the remote areas of the country.

•**Engagement of parents and community elders in local decision making about education of children:** Ministry of Education has established 11,913 school shuras. The schools shura members have been trained in gender related issues and importance of girl's education. One of the tasks of the school shura is to prepare better school environment for girl's education and encourage the families to send their girls to schools.

•**Mobilization of Mosque Imams:** Mosques are still strong catalyst of social change and can be very influential on people's attitude towards education. The ministry of education mobilizes Imams to not only raise people awareness on the status of education in Islam but contribute to education by teaching early primary grades, support programs are provided to Imams. Presently, the social mobilization units are identifying such mosques and the teacher education department is assigned to develop training kits for them and provide training on subject knowledge and pedagogy to Imams.

•**Media Campaigns:** the power of media is well appreciated at the Ministry of Education. Media campaigns have been launched on the importance of education for girls especially on Education Radio and Television.

•**Coordination with Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA):** the ministry of education continuously coordinates with the Ministry of Women Affairs and provides the Ministry with requested support in regard with the promotion of girl's education.

60. Assaults including explosions, unconsciousness between the years 2009 till 2011 on girls education are as following:

•Year 2011 number of attack was 45

•Year 2010, 41

•Year 2009, 36

2. Measures taken in order to prevent attacks on girls schools and the number of attacks from year 2009 till 2012 on schools is as following:

•**Strengthening of School Shuras:** till the year 2011 about 11913 school shuras have been established. One of the major duties of these shuras is analysis of security threats against girl's schools and female teachers and provision of local support for school and student protection.

•**Safety and protection directorate:** Ministry of Education has established a new directorate called safety and protection directorate. The directorate is responsible to collect data on incidents related to education, analyse the data and identify the reasons and causes of school attacks, provide recommendations to decision makers on how to prevent attacks and reduce risks and coordinate related issues with government security institutions.

•Ministry of Education shares relevant information on threats or attacks to schools with relevant security institutions for follow up actions.

3. Actions taken to ensure equal access of girls and women to all level of education:

61. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan consistently monitors the improvement of girls education. Equity and balance are observed in the development of general education particularly with regard to school establishment and upgrading, allocation of new teachers and distribution of resources to provinces and districts.

62. In order to ensure equal access to education for girls and women and protection of girls in schools the following actions have been taken:

•**Establishment and upgrading of girls schools:** to increase gender equality, special attention has been given to establishment and upgrading of girls schools. The number of girl's specific schools has increased from 1398 in 2007 to 2445 in 2012. Meanwhile, the number of mixed schools (with different shifts of boys and girls) has increased from 4325 in 2007 to 7720 in 2012.

•**Recruitment of more female teachers:** there is a strong correlation between the number of female teachers and the number of girls attending schools in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Education gives priority to recruitment of more female teachers. The number of female teachers has increased from 39460 in 2007 to 60738 in 2012.

•**Relocation of female teachers to rural areas through an incentive scheme:** most of rural districts of Afghanistan lack educated girls to become teachers. The ministry of education has initiated a program to recruit qualified female teachers with spouse from urban centre and deploy them to rural girls schools in order to improve enrolment and retention of girls. Special incentives are considered to female teachers to encourage them to teach in remote and rural areas.

•**Accelerated Learning Programs:** accelerated learning programs are conducted to adolescent girls who have missed education opportunities to complete two grades in one year, and to integrate them into general schools when relevant.

•**Scholarship for girls:** to increase female teaching force, a monthly incentive of 60 USD is being provided to female students in Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) in provinces where percentage of girl's enrolment and female teachers is low.

•**Expanding of Teacher Training Colleges:** in order to improve access to teacher education programs especially for females, at least one Teacher Training College with boarding facilities for females is functional in each province. Teacher training support centers are established in 185 rural districts and the Ministry intends to expand these centers to all districts.

•**Distance Learning:** Education Radio and Television process is providing instructional programs on different subjects to complement school teaching and provide general literacy support to those females that cannot attend schools. These programs have proved effective in educational capacity building of girls and women.

•**Girl's friend's school buildings:** the infrastructure department of the ministry of education considers girls-specific issues in the design and construction of buildings for girls. This is expected to make girls schools friendlier to them and therefore increase the retention of girls.

63. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to guarantee and ensure that girls in rural and remote areas have safe access to quality and equal education has taken the following measures:

•**Cooperation with security institutions:** the ministry of education has developed a system to protect education facilities and offices, and equips and trains protection officers in the capital and provinces. The above mentioned safety and protection directorate coordinates with demining agencies to assess and clean school surroundings and routes to schools from land mines and unexploded ordnances.

•**Constant monitoring of students and teachers route to schools:** all education offices and institutes, and students and teachers routes to schools are constantly monitored by protections officers, networks of community leaders and educational staff. Through these networks, possible threats are identified and necessary measures taken to prevent incidents.

•**Alternative path to education to shorten the distance:** education to those who live a long distance from a school is provided through the establishment of community based classes. The classes will be promoted into schools if they meet the ministry's requirement in the future.

64. Incentives to increase the number of female teachers, especially in rural areas:

65. The government of the Islamic republic of Afghanistan in order to increase the number of female teachers in rural areas has taken incentives. Some of which are described as following:

• Incentives for the district level teachers

• Salary incentives when one want begin services

• Class 12th girls are provided with jobs in primary schools

• Privileges for the students and teachers in rural areas both in employment and graduation

66. **Number of schools constructed in 2009-2011:** total number of schools constructed including primary, middle, and college level between the year 2009-2011 reaches to 998 from which 131 were constructed for girls in the mentioned period.

Health

67. Health and nutrition strategy (2007-2013) which through the efforts and commitment of relevant ministries, United Nations, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector was prepared, is aimed at decreasing maternal mortality rate and children death rate, epidemic diseases, decreasing malnutrition and the establishment of a health system. Major strategic measures of the Ministry of Health of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to reach to the above mentioned objectives are as following:

• Promotion of nutrition of the people;

• Strengthening and promotion of human resource;

• Promotion of quality health services access based on equality;

• Strengthening of monitoring role of the Ministry of Health and Government in health sector;

• Support and strengthening of health environment;

• And establishment of a services delivery environment for production and enabling of quality medicines.

Steps taken for increasing women access to health services:

68. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to increase women and girls access to health services has taken various steps:

69. Training programs for midwife in centre and provinces is one of the important steps in this regard. Midwives schools in centre and all provinces in order to increase the number of maid women are active throughout the country. Number of midwife which from the year 2003 till 2012 were trained in these schools has increased from 467 to 3001. Similarly birth rate which takes place in the

presence of birth experts has increased substantially. Based on the afghan families survey statistics in the year 2006 about 19% women give birth to children in the presence of birth experts.

70. Providing of emergency services for women which do abortion is seriously taken into consideration and follow up steps are included in health and policy strategy in this regard, similarly working plan is also prepared where subjects like training staff after abortion including dissemination of books for the participants and trainers, holding of training courses for health employees, monitoring of these courses and implementation of programs and providing of health services are presented.

71. According to the statistics of the 2010 survey regarding maternal mortality rate in Afghanistan, maternal mortality rate has decreased to 327 out of 10,000, whereas this number was 1600 out of 10,000 in the year 2003.

72. Fundamental reason behind decrease in maternal mortality rate in the recent years is increase in professional services during birth and number of birth experts in the health centres.

73. Health policy and strategy which prioritizes mother and babies health, recently has been renewed for the year 2012-2016 which majorly aim for increasing access level to the health services, strengthening of health services in the community and health centres, increase in the number of female employees, promotion of health services quality, promotion of awareness raising programs, promotion of family management programs and distance between birth and treatment of women related diseases.

74. Number of Health centres which provide basic birth related services has reached to 830, while the number of health centres providing general birth services has reached to 81. 68% health centres possess at least one birth expert and birth percentage with their help has reached to 34%. Access to health services before birth has reached to 60% from which 35% is conducted through doctors while 25% are treated through midwife or nurse.

Employment

75. Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in order to eradicate traditions and norms which are major reason for the prevention of women from working in general and particular sectors and providing of a peaceful environment it has taken various steps.

76. These actions include drafting of laws (labour law, law on elimination of violence against women) advertisement through media, workshops, seminars, establishment of commissions, approval of policies and programs (Afghanistan National Development Strategy, national action plan for women, national labour policy from the ministry of labour and social affairs, implementation policy for widow, supporting policies regarding person and families) and establishment of gender units in each ministry and independent and non-independent institutions.

77. Establishment of gender units in ministries and other independent institutions has helped a lot in the eradication of traditions disliked regarding women work.

78. According to the constitution and labour law of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, both men and women enjoy equal rights in employment and in this case any kind of discrimination cannot be tolerated.

79. Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan currently has taken under work different programs, major aim of which is increasing women in general sectors. These programs include social immunity strategy, national developmental strategy, labour and employment policy and professional trainings.

80. Currently in general sector lots of women are busy in works and are enjoying an immune work environment without any kind of violence and harassment.

81. Harassment and sexual assault complains and works in contradiction to laws are presented to a committee for resolving their issues. If their convenience is not achieved then the issue is taken to the high committee for resolving issues related to work elaborated in article 131 of labour law.

82. If there too the issue is not resolve it is then referred to the court.

Concentration to rural women situation

83. Women and girls in the areas which are not under full control of government till now, compared to the women who live in urban areas, are faced with more health and education problems. Women and girls from these areas both from cultural and security aspects are faced with threats and obstacle where they have limited access to education and health.

84. However the ministries of education, health, women affairs, rural rehabilitant and development, interior ministry, district and cleric councils in coordination with each other have made an effort so that they can provide women and girls with education, health and other basic health services, they have been successful in this connection to greater extent.

85. In addition to the establishment of clinics and hospitals, ministry of public health of Afghanistan has also send mobile clinics to the rural areas, which provide women and girls from those areas with health services. Apart from that in those areas the religious clerics, mosque imams and national leaders encourage people against government so that they are not hurdle in front of girl's education and health services.

86. In the education section major progress could be seen in the rural areas. 84% schools are there in the rural areas and these areas possess about 77% population of the country, according to the national statistics department statistics in year 1389 about 64% school students belonged to rural areas which reach to 40% on school level. Gender equality indicator in the primary education in

rural areas is about 60% despite the fact that this indicator in the urban areas is 73% which shows that in the rural areas boys and schools have almost equal access.

Concentration to the disadvantaged groups of women

87. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is seriously following situation of internally displaced women. Currently a committee in the name of emergency committee is there which work under the second vice president.

88. in order to reach in a best way possible and resolve the problems of vulnerable people to the natural disasters and internally displaced people (IDPs) due to different reasons (internal fighting's, natural disasters and family problems) which have transferred from one region to the other, the mentioned committee in the above mentioned situation have provided first aid to all the people and persons especially displaced women and children on proper occasion. In addition to this beside this committee, charity organizations, internal and external NGOs as well provide necessary help and assistance required for the internally displaced people.

Marriage and Family Relations

89. Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the eradication of discriminatory laws in the civil law related to marriage and family rights has taken various steps. These actions include drafting of laws (law on the elimination of violence against women and family law), with the implementation of these laws the gaps and faults which exists in the civil law, will be obliterated.

90. in order to prevent forced and early marriages the actions taken by the government include the implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women and penal code, in these laws forced marriages and early marriages are considered as crimes and the perpetrators are punished in accordance with the law. Important material of these laws are reflected and presented to the public for more awareness in centre and provinces of the country through audio and video advertisement like television spots, radio discussions, and print media and similarly through mosques and religious sources, national gatherings with the help of religious clerics, saints and influential personality's significance of these laws are advertised.

91. Overall there have been improvement in legal, political, economic and social spheres especially human rights particular women rights.

92. Despite the achievements in Afghanistan, however, still faces a wide range of challenges in ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights of all its citizens. Failure to implement transitional justice, impunity, civilian casualties by anti-government groups and international forces, existence of extensive corruption, and lack of capacity in government and civil society institutions are the main problems which still persist.